

TIDBITS

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◆ Athlon Pulls Ahead with 850 MHz

The AMD and Intel megahertz race continued as AMD pulled into the lead by launching an 850-MHz Athlon processor on February 11. Intel will probably retake the lead by the end of the quarter with an 866-MHz Pentium III followed shortly by a 900-MHz Athlon from AMD. In the same week, during ISSCC, Intel demonstrated a 1-GHz Coppermine, and AMD demonstrated a 1.1-GHz Athlon using its new 0.18-micron copper process. This appears to be the first demonstration of AMD's Thunderbird processor. While having little trouble scaling up megahertz on Athlon, AMD needs the Thunderbird version, with its on-chip L2 cache, to deliver performance comparable with Intel's Coppermine.

AMD launched the 850-MHz Athlon with support from tier-one OEMs Compaq, Gateway, and IBM, along with the much smaller Pionex and AMD stalwart CyberMax. This newest Athlon sports an \$849 price tag in 1,000-piece quantities. It replaces the 800-MHz Athlon part, which drops to \$799 in 1,000-piece quantities, as AMD's top speed demon. —K.K.

◆ Media-Processor Consortium Forming

The University of Washington Image Computing Systems Laboratory (UW ICSL; <http://icsl.ee.washington.edu/>) is planning to establish an industry consortium for makers and users of media processors. The consortium is meant to remove barriers to wider use of media processors by providing publications, training, standard software libraries, benchmarking, and consulting services. Professor Yongmin Kim is heading the effort, which will be modeled after previous consortia focused on TI's TMS320C80 MVP (see *MPR 3/28/94-05*, "TI Introduces Four-Processor DSP Chip") and Equator's MAP1000 (see *MPR 12/7/98-01*, "MAP1000 Unfolds at Equator").

As with the previous efforts, participants in the new consortium will pay sponsorship fees to cover the activities of the consortium and share voting control over these activities. For more information, contact Dr. Kim at 206.685.2002 or via email at ykim@u.washington.edu. —P.N.G. ◆

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